To Friends in England, Ireland, Scotland, Holland, New-England, Barbado's, *or any where elſe where the Lord God ſhall order this to come, in the* tender Spirit *of* Life *and* Love, *greeting.*

O Friends,

IN the pure love of God, and freſh Breath of his living Spirit, is it now on my heart to write unto you, in fear, in tenderneſs, in meltings and true ſence of Spirit; and the Lord God ſo guide my heart and words, as that they may reach the witneſs in the hearts of all that ſhall read, and may be felt by that to be purely of God, and not at all of the birth, will, or wiſdom of the fleſh.

I remember, I remember, O Friends, and it is in my heart to put you in remembrance of the cloudy, diſmal and dark day, wherein the Shepherd of *Iſrael* viſited our Souls, and what condition we were in, when he cauſed the Light of Life to ſhine upon our Tabernacles, and to ſpring up in us. O the deſolation, the deſolation that our Souls were in, in that day! O the wandrings up and down, the ſeekings, huntings, mournings, bitter complaints, and deep diſtreſſes for want of our God, and for want of the guidance of his good Spirit! Who can utter now what was then felt of the thickneſs of darkneſs, of the miſery, the loſs, the dreadful captivity that poor Souls

were entangled and wraped up in? O how acceptable was the Visitation of God then! how deep was the sence of his tender Mercy in visiting! how glad was the Soul then of the living Path revealed! how unfainedly did it cleave unto the Lord, and embrace the measure of his Life revealed inwardly to the mind! how did it fear! how did it walk! how did it watch against the Enemy, and cry to the Father for his help! how beautiful were the Feet, and how pleasant the visitations of them, who brought the tydings of this Life and Peace! What love, what unity, what embracing one another in this life, was then witnessed in the hearts of one another! and where this lives and grows to this day, O how precious is that Vessel! but where the Life in any is departed from, where another thing (of another nature) hath entered and been entertained by any, there it is not so; but there the love is grown cold, the mind changed, the goodness of the Lord forgotten, and the poor Soul again entangled in that which formerly it felt some release and deliverance from.

Now, that the Enemy would endeavour to entangle the minds of the Redeemed, and to draw them back from the Lord, and his pure measure of Life in the heart, towards Perdition again, that is not to be questioned, it being his Nature and Property so to do; and that he would use, not only his strength, but also all his subtilty & deceiveableness to affect this (his aim being at the Church and Redeemed of God, more then at the World) appearing as an Angel of Light, in motions like Light, in wayes like Life, this is not to be doubted neither; for how else could he gain upon that, whose eye is towards, and whose aim is after the Lord? But this is the great thing for my heart, and the hearts of Friends, to be exercised in, to wait on the Lord, in his true Light, clearly to discern how far

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we have been assaulted by this Enemy; and how far the Lord hath preserved us from his assaults, or suffered him to prevail upon us: for he hath prevailed in former Ages, under the ministration of the Law in the Prophets dayes, and under the ministration of the Gospel in the Apostles dayes: yea, and I must needs say, he hath also prevailed in our dayes, on all that have not watched in the pure Fear, and been preserved by the pure Power of the Lord. Now doth it not concern every one to look up to the Lord, to guide his heart in searching, that he may truly understand his state? that, if he can witness the preservation of the Power, he may sing praise to the Power; but if he hath been betrayed and come to a loss, he may seek after the Power of Life again, and wait for deliverance and restoring by it. For with the Lord God is Mercy and Bowels, and he seeketh after and saveth the Lost, not once onely, but again and again; onely here is the great danger of Souls, when they are ignorant of their Captivity, and judge in themselves, and are guided by that, which should be judged down and destroyed in them: When Darkness is the light and leader in the Mind, O whither doth that Soul travel! how doth it judge, think, act! how sure doth the Enemy hold it in his Bonds and Chains! how easily doth he prejudice it against that, which is of God and for its good; and incline it to think favourably of that, which only appeareth to be so, and, but is not, and is to its hurt.

Now Friends, there were three things on my heart this morning, which sprang up in true sence and demonstration of God's Spirit, as subtil engines, which the Enemy hath endeavoured to make use of to hurt our Souls; which any that have been entangled in, have received hurt by, and those that have escaped, have cause to bless

the Name of the Preſerver of *ISRAEL*.

The firſt is this, By getting in Perſons prejudices againſt thoſe whom the Lord hath choſen, and pleaſeth to make uſe of in Miniſtring to his People. Pretious is the Miniſtry that is in the Spirit, for the building up in Life, as well as for begetting. How doth the Enemy ſtrive to prejudice the World againſt them, that there may be no begetting to God from amongſt them? And how doth he alſo endeavour to raiſe prejudices among the Begotten, that he may interrupt, and (if poſſibly) ſtop their building up?

The ſecond is this, To draw men from eying and ſubjecting to the preſent diſpenſation, by an earneſt looking after and waiting for another, or further. The ſecurity and bleſſing of the Soul lies in the preſent diſpenſation, in bowing to God there, in being diligent under the exerciſes of his Spirit therein. Now that which draws the mind another way, from the preſent exerciſe, from belief in the preſent gift, under a ſpecious pretence of waiting for ſomewhat more glorious to appear, betrayes and deceives, in thus turning the mind out of the Path which God holds forth and guides into, towards expectation of a Path as yet to be revealed.

The third is this, Under a pretence of ſticking to the enlightning & guidance of ones own meaſure, to ſet up a ſenſe and judgement in the mind, both concerning perſons, practices, and things, which is not truly of the meaſure, but ſecretly inſtilled into and raiſed up in the mind, contrary to the pure meaſure of Life. All theſe have I not onely ſeen in Spirit, but been ſorely aſſaulted with; and that they have not prevailed upon me, even to deſtruction, is the tender mercy and kindneſs of the Lord unto me; and in that tenderneſs and love, for the preſervation

vation of others do I write these things: And indeed, I have somewhat in my heart to say singly and nakedly concerning each of these, which the Lord guide and bless to the conditions of those who stand in need thereof.

First, Concerning those prejudices which the Enemy is apt to lay before the minds of Friends concerning those whom the Lord hath chosen to minister to them in the Power of his Truth, I shall say this: Look over the former dispensations of God; There were false Prophets under the Law, and false Apostles and Ministers in the time of that dispensation of the Gospel, who did strive and labour hard to disturb, undermine and overturn the Building and Work of God in the Spirits of his People then; but did God suffer the True Prophets under the Law, or his True Apostles to fall and lose their Ministry? And is not this present dispensation pure and living, and able to preserve both the Instructers and Instructed in the Lord? It is natural to the Enemy to suggest such a thing; but let all that fear the Lord and love his Truth, take heed how they entertain such a suggestion. Besides, he that hath felt the pure Power in his heart, and waited to be carried through the work of it, and hath been carried through and brought into the dominion, and set as a Pillar in the Temple of the Lord; it is not easie (if possible) for him to fall, the Lord having undertaken for him, that he shall *go no more forth*, as *Rev.* 3. 12. But let me say this to thee, O Soul, who ever hast entertained this prejudice, Thou, through prejudices and suggestions judgest them fallen; but do not they, in the true Eternal Light of the Spirit of Life, see thee fallen? Nay, if thou couldst but retire to the pure measure that at first quickened thee, mightest not thou feel thy own fall?

To the second, Of drawing out the mind to look after another

another or further dispensation, I have this to say: Consider what this dispensation is; Is it not of the Seed it self? Is it not of the Light, Life, and Power of the Father, manifested in the Seed, and in the Soul through the Seed? Is not the sence quick, and the love pure, where this is felt? What wouldst thou have, poor Soul? O that thou feltest the virtue and power of this, surely thou wouldst then find, that thou might'st sit down here in the Peace, Purity, Power, Dominion and Perfection of Life; for it is all in the Seed, and to be revealed to thee, and become thine, as thou art gathered into the Seed, and the Seed opened in thee. Besides, are there not many that have witnessed, and that can witness from God, that this is the dispensation which is to go through the whole earth? and shall it be laid aside in the beginning of its work? *If there had been a Law given, which could have given Life,* (said the Apostle) *Righteousness should have been by the Law.* God doth not change. When he hath brought forth that which will do the thing, why should he change it? Now of the ability of this, there are many witnesses; Yea it hath brought forth Life and Righteousness in those that have been subject to it, and was once owned as the desire of our Souls, and became a covering to our eyes that we could look no further; our hearts in the sense and life of Truth, being satisfied that this was the very thing we had long mourned after, and waited for. O that which begets another sense in any of us, (under what pretence or appearance soever) let it be the abomination of our Souls, that we hearken not, nor give the least entertainment to it, lest by it we be betrayed of our portion in the blessed Treasure and Inheritance.

To the third I say: It is a standing Truth, the Standard we were invited to, and to which we are to keep for ever,

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even the measure of Life in our own Vessels: This will justifie us in our subjection to whatever it reveals; and its justification will stand, whatsoever any man else shall say to the contrary. But this is at unity in it self, and never oppoſeth the motion or appearance of Life in another. Now this is certain, the Enemy will appear as neer life and its motion, as he can; and if I receive his appearance, I am not subject to the measure of life in me, but to him under his deceitful appearance. Therefore if that, which appears like Life in thee, contradict a practice or appearance of Life in others, (who were in the Truth before thee, and are in the growth thereof far beyond thee) oughtest thou not to be sober in Spirit, and to wait in fear, lest thou shouldest be deceived, lest thou shouldest exalt Self and the Enemy in thee, and not the Truth; yea lest thy heart should grow hard, and thy neck stiff against those who are over thee in the Lord, and so thou lose the benefit of their watching over thee and counsel to thee, and of Gods preservation? For out of the Truth, in the deceitful appearance, there is no preservation, nor true Light, nor justification of Life, but self-conceit, fleshly confidence, and the justification of a mans own spirit; and his wisdom then gets up, and exalts it self, as if it were the right thing. The Lord gave the measure of Life to thee, and the Lord also hath given Fathers, Guides, Instructers, Watchmen, in his *Israel*. These have a service from the Lord towards thee, who knoweth that thy Soul hath need of that service; now if the Enemy can prejudice thee against, and withdraw thee from the use of what thou needest, art thou not in danger of falling and miscarriage? Dost not thou set up the measure of Life in thee (if not another thing) beyond its place, state and growth? And can any thing grow and thrive out of the Order and Wisdom

dom of God? Nay, nay, the very measure of life it self will this way come to wither and die in thee, and another thing live in its place, and the Sword of the Lord will be drawn against thee, and thou wilt be cut off from the Body, and also from him who is the quickner and preserver of the Body. Therefore my Friends, as the Enemy watcheth to deceive and destroy, so the Lord keep our Souls in the true Watch and looking up to him, who (to those that fear him) discovereth the deceit, and preserveth from the snare.

And this is witnessed concerning the measure of Life in the heart, and the way of its acting and operation, that it alwayes acts in its place, even in due subjection to the Father of Spirits, and to his Life in others according to its growth: for there is no rent nor division in the living Body, no setting up one measure of Life against another measure, or one motion of Life against another motion, or one practice against another, but all there is in the unity, in the love, in the tenderness, in the sence, in the peace, in the dominion, in the subjection; and that which differeth or dissenteth from the Life, interrupting the Union and Uniformity in the Life, is not of the Life; which when it is every-where cast out, Life to Life will answer every-where; which day my Soul breatheth and waiteth for, even the day wherein Life alone shall live and reign in every Vessel, and all the devices and snares of the Enemy not be able to enter upon, or catch any of God's little simple-hearted ones; but still by the power of Life rising in clearness against them, be thrown back upon the Enemy, to his torment and disadvantage.

And O dear Lambs, consider how easie it is for you to mistake, err, & wander from the Truth; and do not refuse the care, watchfulness and tender counsel of those who were

were inſtrumental to beget you to, and are yet over you in the Lord. Alas, how eaſie is it for the Enemy to deceive your ſimplicity, and get between you and your Life; and then ye are liable to miſs-ſee and miſs-act in all ye do, and to follow the Enemy, as if he were your right guide; and to fight againſt, and reſiſt him who is your true Leader, as if he were your Enemy. The Life in you is to be your Guide and Leader, as it groweth up and receiveth ability, ſtrength and dominion from the Lord; but the Heir is to be under Tutors and Governour, till the time appointed of the Father. And the Seed is meek, humble, tender, lowly, ſenſible of its own ſtate and weakneſs, and ſubject to the exaltation, dominion and pure authority of Life in others where the Lord hath ſo exalted it. That which is otherwiſe in you (which is high, exalted, conceited of it ſelf, and not ſubject to every degree of Life in others, according to its ſtate) is another thing, which is not of the true kind, but onely under a guize appears to you as the true; and as it gets entrance, corrupts your hearts from the true, & deſtils its poyſon into your Spirits, which ye believing, entertaining and feeding upon, as if it were the true, grow up in his poyſonful nature (loſing the pure nature and fellowſhip of the Body) and are travelling whither ye are not aware, being gone from that which at firſt gathered, into that which through ſubtilty hath deceived, appearing to you as if it was ſtill the ſame, and that ye ſtill keep to it, but others are departed; whereas the thing is clean contrary in the ſight of the Lord, and in the ſight of thoſe who keep to the Annointing, and ſee with his eye. Therefore, O dear Lambs and Babes, what need have we to wait, in tender ſence, for the Lord's preſervation of us in that Nature, Spirit and Life, whereof we were begotten, and wherein we were taught, that there we may ſtill learn and keep to the true teaching, in the innocency and ſimplicity of love, and not hearken to the wiſdom and reaſonings of another ſpirit, who lieth at watch to catch the mind with his wiles, and draw from the true thing. Mark how we learned at firſt; Was it not in a Nature, by a ſecret inſtinct and inclination of our minds towards the Life, and the Path, Wayes and Practiſes thereof, whereinto the Body (which before had been gathered) was led and walked before us? The ſame Life, when it maketh us part of the flock, bringeth us into the

ſame ſootſteps; and there we walk with them, in the unity of the ſame Life, and ſence of the ſame Leader; but if the Enemy can at any time draw us from this ſence, and from the belief and practices or practice, which we received in this ſence, (even out of the limits of this nature and its naturalneſs) how eaſie is it for him to perſwade us to queſtion right things in our minds and underſtandings, as if they were wrong, (darkening our eye, and cauſing us to overlook and forget the leading and motion, which we had in the true ſence and nature, from the Annoiting it ſelf) and ſo confidently to think and conclude, that we took up ſuch or ſuch a practice by imitation, and have held it up in form? whereas the Lord (who forgetteth not what and how he hath wrought in us) knoweth that we took it up in the ſence and leading of his Truth, and are now tempted from that in the reaſoning ſubtilty, which we formerly practiſed in the true innocent ſimplicity. And thus getting into us a belief and entertainment of his ſnare, he draws us from that which at firſt led us, and from the practices we were at firſt led into, to hearken to him and follow him, who inſtructeth us in a way we were not inſtructed in before while the Lord inſtructed us; and ſo deſtroyeth his Nature, and the Work of his Spirit in us, dividing us both from the Head and living Body; and ſo our ſtanding, growth, ſence and judgement is altered, and we are neither to the Lord what we were before, nor is he to us what he was before; for he hates that Spirit in all its appearances, and cannot have unity with the Souls that are entangled by it. Therefore, dear Friends, as we prize our gathering to and abiding with the Lord, and the enjoyment of his Love, Peace, Joy and Preſence at preſent, and the Crown and Inheritance of Life with him for ever; ſo let us fear, ſo let us watch, ſo let us cry unto him, to be preſerved by him, which gathered us, in that into which he gathered, and not by any means betrayed (through ſubtilty of the Enemy) into another thing, where the life of the Body (and union with the Body) cannot poſſibly be witneſſed, nor the true juſtification of the Lord, but only an appearing-juſtification of a man's own ſpirit, which muſt afterwards come under condemnation. Ye, who are in the living and true ſence, will feel my love, tenderneſs and faithfulneſs in what I write; and ye who are not, the Lord God of

Bowels

Bowels pitty, and recover out of the ſnare and wrong judgement, that ye may feel it; and feeling that which is true, may be joyned to it, drinking of its virtue and preſervation, and live; which is the earneſt deſire of my Soul to the Lord, who am

From *Alisb.* Priſon, the 14th. of the 5th. month, 1666.

Your Brother and Companion, in the tribulations and mercies which attend the Living.

Iſaac Penington.

POSTSCRIPT.

DEar Friends, Brethren, Lambs and Plants of the moſt High, it is in my heart to add one thing, which I have been deeply exerciſed about, and have received help from the Lord in, wherein I am truly willing (in faithfulneſs and tenderneſs) to be helpful to any of you that ſtand in need thereof, as the Lord ſhall give me ability and opportunity; It is this, Among other things, wherewith the Enemy endeavoureth to reproach thoſe whom the Lord hath ſent forth among ſt us, he maketh uſe of this, as if they wanted Bowels and Tenderneſs. Now Friends, I beſeech you conſider it, that the Enemy may not thus enter you; Did not the Lord conſider of his work, and whom he ſent forth in this his ſervice and labour of Love? Doth he not know the need of bowels and tenderneſs in them, and would he not eſpecially furniſh them therewith? Yea, have they not bowels from, and in the Lord? and doth not the eye that is open ſee, and acknowledge their bowels, and bleſs the Lord for them? I have lately been often warmed in the true ſence of it, and have felt, that therein I have not bleſſed his Name in vain; but the thing is ſo in the ſence of Truth, and ſo acknowledged before the Lord, in that which erreth not: Onely as true judgement and ſeverity

hath

both its proper place in the Lord as well as his Mercy, and is made use of by him towards his people, as all by experience know, so must it be to them also who bear his Image, who must know, in his Wisdom and Authority, whom to smite with his Rod and sharp Reproofs, and when, and whom to cherish in the tenderness and meltings of Love. And this is also love and tenderness (and hath sweet and precious vertue and usefulness in it, both for the recovery and restoring of those whose condition calls for the sharp stroke, and for the preservation of the rest) though it doth not so appear to that, which by no means can endure the judgement, but would have the tenderness and mercy which belongs not to it: for the mercy is to the broken, to the humble, to the meek, to the afflicted and bowed-down ones under the sence of judgement; not to the stiff and stubborn against the righteous judgements and testimonies of the Lord. And my Friends consider, Could the Lord carry on his glorious Work, in the hearts of his Children, without his judgements? Or can they, who are sent by him, possibly carry on his work among his people, without making use of the pruning-knife, to cut off that which sprouted out unnaturally and unseasonably, which (if it be let alone) will draw away the sap from that which should be fed and nourished with it. Dear Friends, the Lord give you a true sence, that in his Light, Life, Wisdom and Presence ye may justifie what is of him, discerning between things that differ, and not call any thing that is evil (as the tenderness which is out of him is) good, nor any thing that is good (as the judgment and severity which is of him is) evil, but may rightly distinguish between the nature of things, knowing every thing that is of God, and owning it in its place.

Alish. Prison the 29th.
of the 6th. month,
1666.

THE END.